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ABSTRACT

This book examines the "think aloud method," which asks people to think aloud while solving a problem so that the resulting protocol can then be analyzed to answer questions about problem solving behavior. The method is presented in detail in the book, along with examples. The book finds that the method is useful both for psychological research and problem solving--and also for knowledge acquisition in the context of building expert computer programs. Presupposing almost no specific knowledge, the book can be used as a practical guide book by social scientists who want to use the think aloud method for research on cognitive processes, and by knowledge engineers who wish to use the method for knowledge acquisition. The book contains introductory sections on those topics which are relevant for both communities. The book concludes with exercises which follow the examples: instructions for 2 problem-solving tasks, protocols of "learning word meanings," analyzing expert problem-solving, coding scheme architectural design, and a protocol of novice problem-solving in physics. (NKA)

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